DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 285 534 IR 012 739

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TITLE Fiction as Proof: Critical Analysis of the Form, Style, and Ideology of Educational Dramatization Films.
SPONS AGENCY Wisconsin Center for Education Research, Madison.
PUB DATE Feb 87
NOTE 15p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (Atlanta, GA, February 26-March 1, 1987). For the complete proceedings, see IR 012 723.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Characterization; Comparative Analysis; Educational Sociology; Film Criticism; Film Production; Films; *Film Study; *Instructional Films; Learning Processes; Social Influences
IDENTIFIERS AECT Research and Theory Division Meeting; *Classical Hollywood Films; Critical Analysis; *Educational Dramatizations

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate how some ways of making sense of the world get privileged over others when teachers and students use specific educational films in specific learning environments. The methods of formalist and ideological film analysis are used to describe how educational films are distinct in their form and style from other types of film. These methodologies are then applied to educational dramatizations, using a sample of 60 films produced between 1930 and 1970 and housed at the American Archives of the Factual Film at Iowa State University. Analysis of the films is aimed at specifying where these films embody certain defining features of classical Hollywood films (CHC) and where they depart from this model. The assumption is made that differences between educational dramatizations and CHC are systematically related to the political, social, and educational purposes of educational films and of the institutions that produce and use them. Initial conclusions about characterization suggest that the way an educational film constructs and uses fictional characters invites the viewer to accept a specific definition of what counts as legitimate knowledge and where that knowledge can be found in our culture. (MES)

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Fiction as Proof: Critical Analysis of the Form, Style, and Ideology of Educational Dramatization Films

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To the Proceedings of the 1987 AECT Convention
Atlanta, Georgia

February, 1987

FICTION AS PROOF: CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE FORM, STYLE, AND IDEOLOGY OF EDUCATIONAL DRAMATIZATION FILMS

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The research for this presentation was supported by a grant from The Wisconsin Center for Educational Research, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Introduction

Some educational technology researchers have expressed a growing awareness and concern about the kinds of research questions the discipline consistently privileges. Research about how individuals learn with media dominates the field, with very little effort directed at examining the social issues raised by the production and use of educational media (Becker, 1985; Kerr, 1985; Taylor, 1985; Ellsworth and Larson, 1986; Andrews and Hakken, 1977, the Professors in Educational Technology Symposium at the 1986 AECT conference).

Questions about social issues can be posed and pursued from a number of methodological and political perspectives. In this paper, I will describe the logic and political perspective that have informed a set of questions on social issues that I am currently researching, and give some examples of the results we can expect from such an approach.

Many researchers concerned with social issues share a broad goal: to understand the relation of educational communications to the social and political processes and conditions that surround them. For a number of political and methodological reasons, I have chosen to investigate this relation by asking the following question: how do some ways of making sense of the world get privileged over others when teachers and students use specific educational films in specific learning environments?

The Need for a Critical Study of Educational Film

I have been convinced that this is a crucial line of inquiry by influential arguments employed within two disciplines concerned with mediated communication. The first is the sociology of education. This field has, in part, set for itself the task of defining and analyzing how knowledge gets constructed through social, economic, political, and ideological processes. Michael Apple has clearly stated the concerns of one highly respected position within the sociology of education: "We need

to examine critically not just 'how a student acquires more knowledge' (the dominant question in our efficiency minded field), but 'why and how particular aspects of the collective culture are presented in school as objective, factual 'knowledge.' How, concretely, may official knowledge represent ideological configurations of the dominant interests in a society? How do schools legitimate these limited and partial standards of knowing as unquestioned truths? Where does knowledge come from? Whose knowledge is it? What social groups does it support?" (Apple, 1979, p. 14).

The second discipline to influence my choice of research questions is film studies. Fifteen years of intense scholarly activity around film as a cultural artefact has produced convincing arguments about how media images contribute to the ways in which our culture constitutes social categories. Film studies has raised questions about how media operate ideologically, that is, how do they form part of our society's representations of itself and part of the ways people both live out and produce those representations? (Kuhn, 1982, p. 4). Often, these representations appear in the media in ways that suggest they can be taken for granted as natural or inherently true.

All knowledge is socially constructed by people interested in perpetuating or changing aspects of the status quo. Educational institutions like schools and educational film producers working within their own sets of interests choose among competing ways of making sense of the world and privilege some over others. Educational institutions have mobilized film form and style not only to image specific types of knowledge--but to image them in ways that make them appear to be the only appropriate or True ways of making sense for everyone on all situations.

This process has major consequences for those social groups whose experiences and ways of making sense of the world do not share the interests or experiences of educational film producers. A recent analysis of films on birth and classroom response to them demonstrates how important it is for educational media producers to take the ideological nature of their work seriously. Prendergast and Prout showed that the birth films viewed by teenagers in four British "education for parenthood" courses presented birth as a "specialist subject in which (mainly male) doctors are the only recognized experts. Women's collective and individual experience and understanding of pregnancy, birth, and the transition to motherhood are subordinate to medical definitions which specify the field of relevance narrowly and mechanically around the 'pregnant patient.'" (Prendergast and Prout, 1985, p. 174). Prendergast and Prout report observing a general sense of shock among many pupils after they viewed the film, with girls appearing especially anxious and appalled, and widely expressing a desire for more information about the mother's experience and more honesty about pain. The researchers concluded in part, that:

> by comparison with a medical framework and knowledge, other knowledge pupils had, often overheard or in fragmented form from aunts, mothers or sisters-in-law, seemed weak and anecdotal. . . . Nevertheless this fragmentary knowledge hidden in the shadows, remained as a lurking suspicion that even the rather upsetting accounts presented on film as legitimate

knowledge may not be the whole truth. Don't women who have been through it seem to be saying something different?" (p. 181-182)

The point of this example is not to suggest that the film producer could have done a better job of dispelling "old wives' tales" in favor of accurate medical "facts." Instead, I offer it as an instance in which one social group's way of making sense of the experience of birth (the male dominated medical profession's) was privileged over and above another's (women's collective and individual experience and understanding of birth), and what effects this had on the film's viewers. Further, I would argue that while the films' medical framing of birth may satisfy the needs of adult professionals working within existing medical practices, it fails miserably at framing birth in a way capable of constructing the kind of knowledge adolescents need. That is, knowledge about self-understanding, relating to others, self-confidence, values, and attitudes that adolescents need as they begin to negotiate what Prendergast and Prout call "the complex terrain of sexuality, courtship, economic and emotional dependence and independence, etc. that may bring them to the threshold of parenthood" (Prendergast and Prout, p. 181).

Methodology

My research attempts to specify precisely how educational films privilege some ways of making sense of the world over others, and how they try to make that privileging appear to be natural or inherently true. The first step I've taken in constructing a critical analysis of educational films, is to specify how they are distinct in their form and style from other types of films. "Form" refers to ways of structuring the filmed material (such as narrative, topical, or argumentative structures); "style" to the inclusion of some stylistic elements available to filmmakers and the exclusion of others (like voice over narration, animated graphics, types of camera movements).

I drew my research sample from over 6000 nonfiction films housed at the American Archives of the Factual Film at Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa. I have chosen to define the norms of three dominant types of educational films: dramatizations, "documentary-like" educational films, and classroom teaching films.

Formalist Film Analysis. In order to define the norms of the forms, styles, and ideologies of eduational films, I have turned to methods of film analysis available from the field of film studies. Using the methodology of formalist film criticism, I am currently performing close scene by scene analyses of the films in my research sample. I have chosen formalist film criticism because it is a widely accepted analytical methodology that isolates aesthetic features of films--those features most often neglected in discussions of educational media within educational technology literature, yet essential for explaining the specificity and effects of mediated communication within education. Formalist analysis enables researchers to identify components necessary for constructing a model of the formal and stylistic norms of any film practice. Norms designate preferred practices and set limits upon invention.

Ideological Film Analysis. I am assuming that the differences in form and style that I locate between educational films and other types of films are not accidental, but are systematically related to the social, political, and educational projects of educational films and the institutions which produce and use them. The task of a critical analysis is not simply to classify films according to their norms of film form and style. Instead, critical analysis seeks to uncover ways in which form and style support the ideological project of educational films.

I am using the methodology of ideological film analysis developed by Annette Kuhn in a series of influential articles and books highly regarded within film studies. This will enable me to determine how form and style interact to legitimate some ways of making sense of the world and to marginalize others. My analysis of ideology will employ a key critical concept in film studies called "mode of address." To identify a film's mode of address is to show how the formal operations of a film solicit from the viewer a particular kind of involvement in the unfolding of the film's story or discourse. The concept of mode of address points to the fact that the film "needs" the viewer to give it its meaning. The viewer is not a passive recipient of an already meaningful message. Depending on the viewers' social, political, economic, racial, and gender positions within a culture, s/he is likely to attach a wide variety of interpretations to any one film. In an attempt to impose some limits on the kinds of meanings that viewers attach to a film, filmmakers consciously and unconsciously manipulate form and style in ways that appeal to filmmaking conventions for the purpose of setting the terms for making sense of the film.

All knowledge is socially constructed and linked to specific social, political, and economic interests. In order to make sense of the film in its own terms, the viewer must be able to adopt--if only imaginatively and temporarily--the social, political, and economic interests that are the condition for the knowledge it constructs. In this way, the the film seeks to engage the viewer not only in the activity of knowledge construction, but in the construction of knowledge from a particular social, political, and economic point of view.

My goal then, is to specify how norms of form, style, and mode of address in educational films solicit and demand from the viewer a closely circumscribed involvement in constructing a particular kind of knowledge. This will enable me to construct and support arguments about how educational film practice--as representation and institution--participates in the social and political construction of knowledge and authority.

Critical Analysis of Educational Dramatizations

Today, I would like to share some of the initial results of applying the methodologies I've described to educational dramatizations. Educational dramatizations use narrative techniques borrowed from Hollywood to present their material. My analysis attempts to specify where these films embody certain defining features of "classical Hollywood films," (CHC) and where they depart from that model. As I said, I am assuming that differences between educational dramatizations and CHC are

systematically related to the political, social, and educational project of educational films and the institutions that produce and use them.

The analysis is based on a sample of 60 educational dramatizations produced between 1930 and 1970, and screened in the past six months at the American Archives of the Factual Film, Iowa State University, Ames Iowa. I have chosen films from 1930 to 1970 because this represents the period during which the aesthetic and ideological characteristics of educational dramatizations became similar and stable across films, and before significant changes in industrial practices and norms began to take place. I selected seven study films representative of the range of forms and styles apparent in the larger sample, and performed close shot by shot analyses of each. They include Film Tactics (1945), School Bus Patrol (1963), Atom Smashers (1952), Social-Sex Attitudes in Adolescence (1952), Using Visual Aids in Training (1947), A Day at the Fair (1947), and Miracle in Paradise Valley (1947).

As Kuhn has argued, the choice by educational filmmakers to borrow Hollywood narrative and stylistic techniques is a strategic one. It is an attempt to turn the ways viewers are used to making sense of narrative feature films to the service of their educational project (Kuhn, 1985, p. 101). We can also see this choice as an attempt to link the pleasure, popularity, and legitimacy of feature films to the viewing of educational films in educational settings.

But the educational project of educational dramatizations is very different from the entertainment project of Hollywood films. The project of educational dramatizations demands that viewer involvement be solicited and gratified in terms that are different from those offered by Hollywood films. I have begun to look at how educational dramatizations narrativize the aquisition of information and knowledge and invite the viewer into a specific kind of involvement in that process.

At this point, I would like to summarize some initial conclusions about how educational dramatization is different from Hollywood films in the way they construct characters. I will argue that the way an educational film constructs and uses fictional characters invites the viewer to accept a specific definition of what counts as legitimate "knowledge," and where that knowledge can be found in our culture.

Characterization in Classical Hollywood Narratives

Characterization is the engine of the narrative machine that sweeps us along in (CHC). Hollywood stories are chains of causes and effects, one thing causes another. Characters make things happen, which then have consequences for themselves and other characters. Their actions are motivated by traits of personality or individual psychology. Character goals and desires determine the series of causes and effects which propel the story forward.

The common underlying structure of CHC's chain of cause and effect is an initial problem in the fictional world that sets the story in motion. Usually it is the lack or loss of something in a character's life: manhood

(seldom womanhood), love, power, ability to understand and relate to others or oneself, "meaning," etc. The rest of the film traces that character's struggle against obstacles to fill this void and reach a state of rest and plentitude.

Stories do not have to be told this way. Alternatives to character originated causes and effects include supernatural causes, natural causes, historical causes, and unmotivated coincidences. But these are seldom the causal forces in CHC and when they appear, they are usually subordinated to personalized causation. Film critics have argued that this reinforces a dominant ideological position within American culture: individualism and an ethic that places the responsibility for "success" or "failure" in society on the individual's willingness and ability to work hard within the system as it is.

What kind of viewer involvement does CHC's construction and use of characters solicit? Since characters are revealed to us in terms of their individuality and psychology, we are encouaged to identify with them emotionally. Because this is often pleasurable, we are willing to "go along" with the film and suspend our disbelief. In their exhaustive study of the form and style of classical Hollywood films, Bordwell and Thompson claim that character causality intensifies steadily from the opening scenes to the closing scenes causing a growing absorption on the part of the spectator (Bordwell and Thompson, 1985). Hollywood films try to hide the fact that someone outside of the fictional world of the story is actually constructing and manipulating the story. They do this through characterization, by implying that everything that happens in the story is the result of characters' actions and desires--not the result of an industry with particular economic, social, and political interests in telling particular types of stories. This has the effect of "naturalizing" the story: implying "that's the way people are; they made the story's events happen to them." Of course we know that the characters on the screen are not real people, but Hollywood films make it pleasurable to suspend our disbelief, identify with them emotionally, and go along with the story as if it were really happening. The film encourages us to do this by presenting characters as psychologically rounded individuals who seem to have much in common with the films' viewers. Typically, the ending is a happy one, in which the good characters' goals and desires are fulfilled.

The primary kind of viewer involvement CHC solicits then, is emotional identification with the characters, wanting to know what will happen to them next. In order to find out what happens to them next, the viewer agreeably helps to "complete" the film, to make sense of it, by recalling salient causes from earlier parts of the film and anticipating more or less likely effects in the present or coming scenes. The ending fills all the causal gaps. The result is a plentitude and linearity that seems to leave no questions unanswered, no alternatives visible or desirable. If the film has successfully enlisted our sympathies for the characters, we too are rewarded with a feeling of closure, fulfillment, and plentitude--states that do not encourage questioning the premises of the film's story or the motives of the characters; or motivate us to imagine alternative endings.

Characterization in Educational Dramatizations

While educational dramatizations borrow techniques of form and style from CHC in a strategic attempt to exploit the ways viewers are used to making sense of CHC films, the fact that the success of their educational project depends on a different kind of spectator involvement requires signficant departures from the CHC model. An analysis of the differences in how educational dramatizations use characterization can help us to specify the ideological work of educational dramatizations.

Instead of being psychologically rounded individuals distinguishable from one another by personality traits, individual goals and desires, characters in educational dramatizations tend to be representatives of social types and attitudes. In CHC, characters learn and grow through their personal experiences, finding happiness, success, and insight through the trials and pain of personal battles against forces of evil trying to keep them from their goals. But educational dramatizations consistently construct characters to appear as if they are unmotivated to learn what they do not know. If left to themselves, they would simply act out what comes "naturally" to them (like irresponsible sexual experimentation in Social-Sex Adjustment in Adolescence) and remain ignorant of a better way, or they would persist in their habits, traditions, or illusions that things are fine the way they have always been. Without the cause and effect chain of events resulting from characters and desires typical of CHC narratives, educational dramatizations need another kind of "glue" to hold their stories together and another kind of motivation to propel it forward. Consistently, in educational dramatizations, characters move from a state of ignorance to a state of knowledge only through the intervention of an expert. The expert may be a character in the story (like the angel in Miracle in Paradise Valley or the scientist in Atom Smashers), s/he may be a voice over narrator whom we never see (as in Social-Sex Adjustment in Adolescence or A Day at the Fair) or s/he may be a combination of voice over narrator and character as in School Bus Patrol, when the teacher addresses us directly from the screen to explain events, and then appears in flashbacks of events as one of the characters.

The expert is the sole enunciator of truth and knowledge in the film, sometimes speaking directly to the viewers, other times speaking to the characters for the benefit of the viewers. As soon as the expert arrives on the scene of the dramatization--either as character or as voice over narrator--the film begins an intricate interweaving of the experts' conceptual discourse on some topic and the story of the process through which characters' eyes are opened to knowledge and therefore to the "truth."

The conceptual discourse of the expert becomes the primary motivator of the form and direction of the dramatization. Social-Sex Adjustment in Adolescence, for example, is not segmented into dramatic scenes developed along lines of causes and effects that result from character action and their consequences. Instead, the voice of the unseen male narrator orders the events of the story into stages of social/sexual development and adjustment. The reason to change from one scene to the next is not linked to a character's actions--but instead to the next step in the narrartor's discourse about the normality of Bob and Mary's development.

Bob, Mary, and their parents function as little more than one-dimensional illustrations of the conceptual discourse of the narrator. They provide narrative evidence in support of his particular interpretation of social/sexual adjustment. The narrator defines for the viewer what goes on emotionally and physically for "normal" adolescents, and on cue, the characters act out the desires, motivations, and behaviors he attributes to them. The narrator's discourse is validated and valorized by the dramatization. The story rewards its characters for acting according to the narrators' arguments and shows the negative consequences of ignorance of his knowledge. Unlike the characters, the expert has access to knowledge capable of correcting the inadequate "natural" instincts or "misinformation" of characters, or validating those instincts born out by the conceptual discourse.

The kind of knowledge possessed by the expert is very different from that of the characters. It is analytical: capable of breaking processes and objects down into stages and elements, to reveal for us and the characters the underlying causal and structural relationships. The implciation is that if we understand the causal relations between actions and effects, we will be better able to control events and prevent negative outcomes. The expert's knowledge is also rational and linear, as opposed to experiential and intuitive. Therefore, it can be abstracted into general principles applicable to many situations, rather than linked to the personal, practical knowledge gained by people solving problems in the unique circumstances of everyday life.

Educational dramatizations encourage us to identify with the expert and her/his way of making sense of the situation in the film, over and above that of the characters. The expert is in a privileged position of knowledge and control. He defines the nature of situations, interprets characters' responses for them and to them, evaluates and corrects their behaviors, exposes their ignorance, corrects their misunderstanding or misguided behaviors. It is difficult to identify emotionally with characters who are one dimensional, often wrong, sometimes stubborn, and have no clear motives or goals. To identify with the expert on the other hand, is to be assured of a position of certainty and control. Educational dramatizations draw us into their conceptual discourses by a steady accumulation of narrative and rhetorical evidence that the expert is right, and the characters are wrong (at least ignorant).

But the "proof" offered of the expert's rightness--the guarantee that his/her knowledge is correct--is seldom presented in the form of evidence from experiments, research, or testimony about real peoples' actual experiences. Instead, educational dramatizations offer the fictional narrative as proof that the expert's knowledge is correct. Once the story's characters let the expert's knowledge guide their choices and behaviors, they are guaranteed of happy ending to their story. The expert is never wrong, and the expert is always benevolent.

The revelation of the expert's knowledge and how the characters acquire it is only half of the story of the project of educational dramatizations. As we see in other types of educational film, knowledge can be presented through a variety of formal devices like instructional

designs developed for classroom teaching and documentary forms. I would like to conclude my argument by making the claim that educational films have used dramatization for the purpose of representing a particular kind of knowledge.

The dramatizations I have studied consistently imply that the characters of their stories suffer from a double lack: the lack of information about a particular subject, issue, or process; plus the lack of knowledge about how to use and/or interpret that information. The function that characterization serves in educational dramatization then, is precisely to model the proper use or interpretation of the knowledge offered by the expert. Characterization in educational films appeals to the affective domain by borrowing the viewing habits already in place for Hollywood fictional films--namely a suspension of disbelief and a readiness to identify emotionally with the characters. I have shown that the possibilities and rewards of identifying with characters in educational dramatizations are much weaker than those in CHC. Nevertheless, the point of modeling proper use and interpretation of the expert's knowledge is to have a motivational effect on the viewers--to motivate them to use their new knowledge as the fictional characters did. What educational dramatizations lack in strong characters to identify with, they make up for in rewards promised for identification. Unlike Hollywood films, educational dramatizations imply that their happy endings are not fantasies, they can come true for us, if we only put the film's knowledge to use as the characters have shown us.

"Proper use" of knowledge in these films most often means uses that lead to "positive social implications" that the film personalizes by showing their effects on the characters' lives. In my sample, positive social implications have included respect for police officers, safety on the job, patriotism, community pride civic action, effective educational strategies for training and classroom teaching, and prosocial interpersonal relations. To date, not one of the educational dramatizations I have viewed has qualified its promises of success or goodness of the project if only the viewer would acquire certain knowledge and use it properly.

Thus, the ideological work of educational dramatizations is to make a historically and culturally specific interpretation of what consititutes positive social implications and proper use and interpretation of knowledge appear to be neutral, scientific, natural, true, inherently good and benevolent. The form of educational dramatizations tries to accomplish this work by making the fictional world of the characters appear to be the real world, unaffected by the expert's discourse, and therefore able to be used as empirical evidence in support of the expert's discourse.

For example, the fictional world of the characters is made to seem to exist separately from the expert's discourse. Narrator's encourage this illusion by referring to the fictional plane of the film as being governed by natural forces outside of his/her discourse--forces like time. In Social-Sex Adjustment in Adolescence, when the narrator wished to use the experiences of characters as proof of a point in the conceptual discourse, he brings us into their separate and autonomous world with references like: "Until one day, when Bob was 16 . . ." or "meanwhile." Voice over narrators consistently explain events occurring in the story as if they

were really happening, and were not constructed as illustrations of the expert's discourse. In A Day at the Fair, the narrator says: "Here in the cattle barn on the fairground, the folks are at work early, tending and grooming their cattle."

This illusion of the "reality" of the fictional plane is further reinforced when characters sometimes act autonomously and in spite of the expert's discourse. In Social-Sex Adjustment in Adolescence,· Bob and Mary's parents are not controlled by the narrator's voice over. They act from their own knowledge and experience, without access to the narrator's (and the viewer's) "more complete" understanding of the situtation. As a result, they make mistakes, worry needlessly, and forget important information. The fact that the narrator does not intervene reinforces the illusion that he cannot intervene--because they are real people in the real world.

As I argued above, dramatization further guarantees the accuracy of the expert's discourse when the story rewards the characters' appropriate use of the expert's knowledge and punishes inappropriate use or ignorance. In Social-Sex Adjustment in Adolescence, images of Bob and Mary's happy wedding day are accompanied by the narrator's explanation for their happiness: "Bob and Mary had a healthy attitude toward one another as man and woman that was built up step by step since childhood," and he goes on to recount what their parents did right to prepare them for this day.

A very powerful use of dramatization to naturalize the expert's discourse is to construct stories of how characters apparently learn from their experiences in the apparently real world of the dramatization. In our culture, "experience" enjoys a privileged relationship to "reality," in that experience is seen as a direct link to the naturally occurring material forces of reality. Since the experience of characters in educational dramatizations always confirms the expert's discourse, dramatization becomes a mechanism by which the film's conceptual discourse is conflated with experience or reality.

Finally, dramatization offers a powerful mechanism for conflating social appropriateness with absolute truth. What is cast by the film as an "educational" project of modeling proper use and intepretation of knowledge for the social good is ultimately an ideological project. Educational dramatizations are interested in privileging analytical, rational knowledge arrived at through the scientific method over and above practical and intitutive knowledge arrived at through problem solving in unique contexts. Further, they are interested in privileging some applications of that knowledge over others. Dramatization aids in this project by linking the characters' motivations for acting "properly" to individualized desires, thereby removing their choices from the social domain and placing them in the personal domain. Thus, in Miracle in Paradise Valley, the experts give our hero information about the economic and social costs of farm accidents. But ultimately, he is motivated to organize people in a safety campaign only after an angel shows him the future in which neighbors suffer personal injury and loss. Likewise, in Social Sex Atttitudes in Adolescence, Bob and Mary are motivated to use their information about sex "responsibly" not out of a concern for social

order and the reproduction of middle class values and a patriarchal family structure; but out of their individual desires for "meaningful love."

But educational dramatizations, like all ideological texts, ultimately fail in their attempts to conflate the social and political with the natural. Knowledge, power, and desire are often contradictory and result in gaps and silences in the relation between the expert's discourse and the character's story. While Social-Sex Adjustment in Adolescence's main project is to model proper parenting of adolescents, there are some crises and transitions in Bob and Mary's development that the expert's discourse cannot handle without exposing the social constructedness of its own values and assumptions. These crises include Mary's emotional attraction to women, Bob's experiences with mastrubation and pornography, Mary's interest in "the wrong boy," and Bob and Mary's attraction to "inappropriate knowledge and attitudes" that come from books, jokes, peers, teenage culture, jazz music.

At these moments in the film, gaps open up in the cause-effect relations of events in the story--outcomes of characters' actions are left unexplained and unaddressed by the expert's discourse. Instead of being resolved by parental action influenced by the expert's discourse, these crises may be resolved "naturally", as when Bob and Mary "pass through a stage," without parental intervention (Mary's emotional attraction to other girls is just a phase). Or they may be resolved magically, without providing models of appropriate parental response: the wrong boy moves away before Mom has to confront the situation, Bob finds out about mastrubation and solves his "problem" with it off screen, and his mother never has to confront this issue.

Finally, some issues that cannot be addressed by the expert's discourse without revealing its values and assumptions are simply left unanswered: we never find out what went wrong with the film's "bad" kids who used their knowledge of sex inappropriately. Is the blame biological, parental, or social? In order to address this question the narrator must move his explanation of social-sex adjustment out of the domain of biology (or the natural) and into the domain of ideology (or the social and political).

The unwillngness of this educational dramatization, and the others, to admit and interrogate the social construction of knowledge and perscriptions of its proper use perpetuates the "crisis" of education we are experiencing in our culture today. Without investigating where knowlege comes from, who constructs it out of what interests, and whose experiences of the world get validated when educational media producers consciously or unconsciously adopt the conventions of educational dramatizations, educational technologists and other educators are in danger of producing at best irrelevant, and at worst, alienating and oppressive curriculum materials that systematically silence and devalue the ways that some students experience and come to understand the world.

The questions and methodologies I have outlined here today can give researchers in educational technology tools capable of beginning a historical analysis of the ideological interests of educational media producers, and how those interests have informed the form and style of

media products. The purpose of such a line of inquiry is to foster a discipline that is conscious of its own assumptions, traditions, and interests--and committed to acting responsibly when it finds itself in the position of defining what counts as knowledge, and whose knowledge is to be legitimated?